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CFC#: 31891

July 6, 2023

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senate  
730 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Sarbanes  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2370 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Chesapeake National Recreation Area

Dear Senator Van Hollen and Representative Sarbanes:

On behalf of Waterkeepers Chesapeake, I am writing to thank you for your leadership to create the Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA), a new unit of the National Park System in the Chesapeake watershed. We are a coalition of seventeen Waterkeepers working to make the local waters of the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays swimmable and fishable as well as accessible to all within the watershed, regardless of their status. We strongly support the establishment of this new national recreation area, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that the Chesapeake is recognized for its natural and historic significance by inclusion in the National Park System.

Those of us who live and work in this region know that the Chesapeake Bay watershed is a natural wonder fully deserving of national park status. We strongly support the goals of the new recreation area to recognize the Chesapeake's national significance, conserve and interpret these resources, expand public access, enhance tourism and local economies, engage watershed communities, promote diversity and equity, improve water quality, and advance the conservation goals of the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. As Waterkeepers, we are dedicated to ensuring that our communities have access to local waterways and the Bay. The CNRA would be a significant step forward in access to and conservation of our water resources.

We endorse the fair acquisition of land and land-based resources via willing donation, purchase from a willing seller, and/or exchange or transfer from another Federal Agency. And we support the requirements that nothing in the Act would impact or affect commercial or recreational fishing or enlarge or diminish jurisdiction of each State, with respect to fish and wildlife management.

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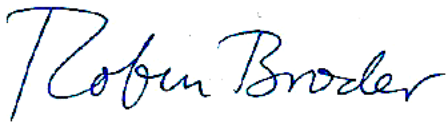
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Establishing the CNRA will allow all stories of the watershed, its citizens, and its history to be shared with visitors from across the world. The creation of the CNRA will enhance public understanding of the Bay and local rivers and wetlands at participating National Park Service sites and partner sites to tell the story of the outstanding, remarkable, and nationally significant resources of the Bay watershed.

Thank you once again for leading this important initiative. We look forward to working with you on bill introduction and final passage to establish this new national recreation area in the Chesapeake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin Broder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Robin Broder  
Acting Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Ben Cardin  
The Honorable Mark Warner  
The Honorable Tim Kaine  
The Honorable Bobby Scott